

MEROZ CURSE

FOR NOT
HELPING THE LORD

Against the *Mightie*.

BEING

The Substance of a SERMON, Preached on
a day of Humiliation, at *St Sepulchers,*
LONDON, Decemb. 2. 1641.

By that Powerfull and Godly *Divine,*
M^r STEPHEN MARSHALL.

Published in one sheet of Paper, (not by the Author)
but by a Lover of the Truth, for their good especially,
that are not able to buy bigger Bookes.

Being a very seasonable Subject, wherein all that either
out of policie or sloth, refuse to helpe the LORD, may see
their danger; and they that are willing are called, and directions
given to them, both what manner of persons they ought to be,
and what they ought to do to help the Lord.

Wherein also every true Christian may see, that though
they be never so weake or poore, yet they may, and ought
to helpe the Lord, and by what means.

*Ezekiel 13. 5. They have not risen up in the gap, neither made up the hedge for
the house of Israel, to stand in the battell in the day of the Lord.*

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MEROZ Curse.

Judg. 5. 23. *Curse ytt Meroz, said the Angel of the Lord, Curse the inhabitants thereof, because they came not to helpe the Lord, to helpe the Lord against the mighty.*



His Verse contains a Curse against a whole City, and all in it; wherein we may consider these particulars:

1. The *Aspiratie* that should have beene performed, and that was, a comming out to the helpe of the Lord against the mighty, the omission whereof was the cause of the Curse.

2. The persons cursed and they were the inhabitants of *Meroz*.

3. The commander of the Curse, *The Angel of the Lord*, to wit Christ Iesushimselfe, who is the Angell of the Covenant, and Captaine of the Lords Host.

In the duty that should have beene performed, we may consider, first, the parties they should have helped, *the Lord*: secondly, against whom they should have helped the Lord; and that is, *against the mighty*.

In the persons cursed, wee may consider, first, what the curse was; and that I do confesse I cannot tell, whether it was fire or pestilence, but this is most certaine, Gods curse is the ruine of those people on whom it lightes: secondly, wee may consider what this city *Meroz* was, and for that, I shall tell you, I cannot find in the whole Booke of God this city mentioned once againe, and therefore cannot certainly tell you where it was situated, onely this we may certainly conclude, that it was neer unto the place where the Lords people were in danger of their enemies.

I have begun this Text in another Congregation, I will therefore give you the briefe heads of what I have elsewhere more largely delivered, and so come to that which remains.

First, from the consideration of the parties against whom they should have holpen, *the Lord*, it is said they were mighty; whence wee have observed this point.

That the mighty ones of the earth do many times oppose the Lord.

Secondly, from thence we have also observed:

That Gods people should not be afraid to oppose the mighty, when the cause is the Lords.

Secondly, from the consideration of the parties whom they should have holpen, they were the people of God, and yet the Lord calls this owne people, whence I observe :

Doctr. That to helpe Gods people, is to helpe the Lord :

3. Thirdly, from the consideration of this neere nesse to the people of God, in regard of habitation I observed :

Doctr. That the neerer a people are to Gods people in distresse, the more is their helpe required. and the greater is their sinne, if they doe not helpe them : this I applyed to our selves, in regard of that case of Ireland.

4. Fourthly, from the Consideration that the curse extends to all the inhabitants of the city, I observed :

Doctr. That there is neither man nor woman, but they may afford some help to Gods people in distresse, if they have grace in their hearts ; thus farre have I gone already. and now the maine point that I intend to insist upon at this time, is this.

Doctr. That they are all cursed that helpe not the Lord, that is, that helpe not the Lords people in the time of their distresse ; for the prooffe of this point, observe but that reprehension of Moses, *Numb. 32. 26.* to the children of Gad and the children of Ruben, *Shall your brethren, saith he, goe to warre, and yee tarry here ? no by no means. And so our Saviour, in Mat. 25. 41.* will say, *Goe yee cursed into everlasting fire, prepared for the Devil and his angels ; for I was hungry, and yee gave me no meat ; I was thursty, and yee gave me no drinke.* But I will stand no longer on the prooffe of the point, but come unto the use of it, which I doe principally intend to stand upon.

Use. And first of all, is it so, that they are all cursed that helpe not the Lord against the mighty ? then surely they are cursed with a heaue curse, that helpe the mighty against the Lord : but I hope there be few or none such in this Congregation, and I desire not to speake much to them that be absent ; yet if any of you that heare me, have any friends that are guilty of it, I pray you tell them what a fearefull condition they are in, that set themselves against the Lord.

But there are others, who are not so bad as to helpe the mighty against the Lord, and yet not so good as to helpe the Lord against the mighty, but stand as neuters at such times when it is hard to say, whether the Lord or the mighty will prevaile ; and of these there are two sorts.

1. The first sort doe it out of policy, as now at this time, the Church of God in England, by reason of the mighty, hath bene long under tyrannicall government, and the Lord, we hope, is now at warres with them, why there are some politicians, that stand looking on to see which side will prevail. And if the Lord should now reforme this government, and so prevaile, why then they would be on the Lords side, but if the mighty should prevaile, which the Lord forbid, then they would be on the mighties side. But as Gideon said to the men of Succoth, when they refused to give morseis of bread to his people that followed after Zebah and

zelus Kings of *Adidian*, when the Lord hath delivered them into mine hand. I will tear your flesh with thorns of the wilderness, and will burn you, so say I to such, if the Lord prevail against the enemies of his Church, the Lord will make them smart, be sure of it, for that you will now afford him no help against them.

The second sort are such as refuse to help the Lord, not so much out of policy as out of sloth and negligence, like unto the men of *Labish Gilead*, that went not to warre with their brethren against the *Benjamites*; but let such consider what the *Israelites* did unto them, by reason of this their sloth and negligence, as you may read; *Judg. 21. 8. &c.* to wit, how they fell upon them and destroyed them, because they came not up to *Mizpe* to the Lord.

The next use shall be for exhortation to you all, is it so, that they are cursed that help not the Lord against this mighty? why then brethren, as you desire to be freed from this curse, and to obtaine a blessing at the Lords hands, be exhorted to put forth your hands now to the help of the Lord, I pray you looke on me as on one that commeth amongst you this day to beat a drum in your eares, to see who will come out to follow the Lambe. Now then beloved, so many of you as are willing, come, and I will give you direction what to doe, that you may all of you afford some help to the Lord at this time.

And first let me tell you, that the Lord doth not require your help so much for any need he hath of it, as for to honour you thereby; for beloved, you are to know, that it is an honour to help the Lord, the Lord, as I may say, scornes to have help from every one, no, you must be fitly qualified before you be meet to helpe the Lord, and that with these three things.

First you must be godly, or else you are unfit to be helpers of the Lord; the Lambes followers must be such as are chosen and called, and faithful, they must be holy men, and holy women; therefore, you that are ungodly persons, believe it, you are not called to this help of the Lord.

Secondly, you must be selfe-denying persons, you must deny your owne profit, your owne ease, your owne friends, yea, and all that you call your owne; the Apostle *Paul* writing to the *Philippians*, saith, *hee hath no man like minded to Timotheus*, and in the next verse hee gives the reason, saying, *for all seeke their owne, and not the things of Iesus Christ*.

Therefore I say, you can never be fit to helpe the Lord, untill you put off all that is your owne, and say to Christ, as *Ruth* said unto *Naomi*, *Whither thou goest I will goe, and where thou dwellest I will dwell, thy people shall be my people, and thy God my God*.

Thirdly, you must be such persons as have a love to the Church; for beloved, you shall meet with so many rubs in the way, so many discouragements to flesh and blood, that if you have not a great love to the cause of Christ, you will be subject to turne backe from the Lords

cause when there is most need of your helpe: therefore, alluding to that of the Apostle, 1 Cor. 12. I say unto you, the most excellent way in lord, it is that which constitutes a man to be a meet follower of Christ; you know it is said of *Jacob*, Gen. 29. 20. that the seven yeeres he served for *Rachel*, seemed unto him but a few dayes, because hee loved her; even so brethren, if you get a love to Christ and his Church, you will willingly help the Lord, though you meet with some difficulties, therefore never rest, untill thou hast so much love, as to say, as I remember a godly Minister said, I praise God, I am not troubled at any crosse, but at the afflictions of Gods Church; nor I care for no welfare so much, as for the welfare of Christ Church.

Quest. But it may be some will say, O Sir, but how should I doe to get such a love to the Church of Christ?

Ans. First consider how dearly Christ hath loved it, that he hath given himselfe for it.

2. Secondly, consider that he hath left his Church here amongst us, and suffers it sometimes to be in distresse, to try our love to it.

3. Thirdly, consider, that if thou be a member of it, then all the rest are very neere unto thee, even thy brethren and sisters.

Quest. But suppose I be willing to helpe the Church to my power, what direction will you give me, that I may put forth that power which I have?

Ans. First, doe as godly *Nebemiah*, *Daniel*, and old *Eli* did, that is, enquire diligently what the state of the Church is; and let me tell you, brethren, I am perswaded that it is a great fault of many of us here in *England*, that wee doe not performe this dutie as we ought, wherefore be exhorted to labour at this time to find out the state of Gods Church, both in *England* and in *Ireland*.

2. Secondly, when thou hast found out the state of the Church, and so consequently what it wanteth, then in the next place, consider what thou hast in thine hands to supply the want thereof: thou must observe this rule, that whatsoever good God hath put into thine hands, thou art but a Steward of it, and thou art to imploy it for the good of Gods Church; all Gods people have an interest in that talent that God hath committed to thy employment.

Now, there is one talent which I am sure every childe of God that is effectually called hath, though they be never so poore, and that is the talent of prayer; for indeed, it is the surest evidence to witness unto them, that the spirit of Christ is in them, when they can cry *Abba* Father: according to the lawes of our Kingdome, a child cannot be proved to be borne alive, except there be witness that it was heard to cry; even so we say in Divinity, that every one that hath the new birth can cry to God his Father in prayer; so that I say, every child of God hath this talent of prayer.

And this talent the Lord requires they should use and imploy for the

good of his Church and people, according to that Scripture, *Pray for the peace of Jerusalem*, and that in *Isay 62*. *Yea that are the Lords remembrancers, give him no rest, till he be set up Jerusalem, the praise of the world*; and beloved, let me tell you, the exercise of this talent of prayer, is charged upon all ranks and conditions of men; for that the exercise of no other talent can doe any good without this, neither the governing of the Magistrate, nor preaching of the Minister, nor fighting of the souldier, nor the contribution of the rich man, will doe any good without prayer, it is prayer that brings a blessing downe upon all; yea, the exercise of this talent of prayer many times doth inore good than all the rest. A praying Christian (let me speake it with holy reverence) can doe all that God can doe; and therefore, in *1 King. 8*. *Salomon reckoneth up all the hard conditions that the Church of God can fall into, and alwayes concludes, then heare thou in heaven. &c.* and then God answers, *I have heard thy prayers and supplications that thou hast made before me*; with this talent of prayer the servants of God have overcome God, and held his hands, in so much that the Lord, if I may so speake, hath been glad to intreat them and command them to hold their tongues, and let him alone. Beloved, as God onely can remove the Churches troubles, so prayer onely can prevaile with God to doe it; it is prayer that bringeth all Gods promises into performances; there is not any part of the world, but a Christian can reach it by prayer; there is not a blessing in heaven, but prayer can fetch it downe; prayer can knocke downe enemies; when *Moses* held up his hands, *Israel* prevailed; *David* by prayer choked *Ambiohel*; *Hester* and her people by prayer hanged *Haman*. So that I may say of prayer, as the Author to the Hebrewes saith of the faith of those worthies there mentioned, the time would be too short, to reckon up all that a Christian can doe by prayer.

Exod. 17. 12

And yet alas, I feare me, there are some Christians who have grace in their hearts, that have not employed this their talent for the good of Gods Church, whose conscience will witness unto them that they have not spent an houre in their closets, in exercising this talent for the good of Gods Church: O, be humbled this day, for this your selfe-love, and want of love to Gods Church. And I am perswaded, that the want of this hath beene the cause that the enemies prevaile so in Ireland at this time, and that things goe on so heavily at *Parliament* here at home.

Wherefore you that feare God, I beseech you be humbled for your omission of this duty: and be exhorted to set upon the practice of it, O pray, pray for the *Parliament*, O pray, pray for *Ireland*, and call upon others to pray; there is no man so meane in his estate, or weake in his body, but if he be a Christian, he may contribute something towards this great worke, though he be not able to lend a peny, yet he may give a subsidie of prayers. Beloved, if all Christians would exercise this talent aright, their prayers would be as a thundring Army against the enemies of Gods Church.

But

14. Now shall I need to exhort thee to the talent a right Obedience to
15. be sure that prayer be prayer, let it not only be in speech, but
16. power put thy desires before God, and to this end, get a heart truly af-
17. fected with the thing thou prayest for.

18. About to get an humble and false denying faith, remember *Abra-*
19. *ham*, when he came before the Lord in prayer, confessed he was but dust
20. and ashes, and *Isaac*, when he came before the Lord in prayer, confessed
21. himself unworthy of the least of all Gods mercies; and *David* crye
22. out, *Hear me O Lord, for I am poore.*

23. Alwayes when thou goest to prayer, be sure to carry thy Mediator
24. along with thee, by faith in the promises, and begge earnestly for the
25. Lords sake, as *David* did, that so thy prayers may be fervent; O be-
26. loved Christians, if you would pray, and pray thus, you would be the
27. most usefull people in all the world, yea, you would be the very price
28. to these united Kingdomes; marke it then you men of the world, you
29. *Isaiah*, that have beene wont to scoffe at praying Christians,
30. and to wish them all packed hence, and at new *England*, ah, you know
31. not what an evill you wish unto your selves therein, if they were gone,
32. woe be to you.

33. And thus much shall suffice to have beene spoken of the talent of
34. prayer; in the next place what outward abilities forever thou hast, thou
35. must also in play for the good of Gods Church; for hee that is a
36. man, if hee pray and hold his purse, hee cannot expect that his prayer
37. should be available.

38. Wherefore, if God have given thee both grace and money, I doe in
39. the name of God beseech thee, to imploy both for the good of Gods
40. Church and people, else it is to be feared, it may be as truly said to thee
41. as the poore man said to the Bishop, who asking him a penny for *Carls*
42. his sake, the Bishop answered, I will not give thee a penny, but I will give
43. thee my blessing; the poore man answered, ah Master, if you loved your
44. blessing as well as your penny, you would not give mee that neither.
45. Wherefore then to conclude, whatsoever God hath given thee that may
46. do the Church good, be willing to part with it for the Churches good.

FINIS.

